

Career in the Merchant Navy (Shipping)

Introduction

If you are a student of science or Mechanical Engineering and if your age is between 17 and 25, if you love the outdoors and have an aptitude for working hard and of a friendly disposition and if you do not like the idea of working on a desk from 9 to 5 then read about an exciting career in the Merchant Navy. Merchant Navy as a career option has been around for quite some time, but due to it being an industry within the niche sector, many students are not aware of the career option in this field. Merchant navy is the most exiting and lucrative career that can be offered to any young student as a career option and it certainly is not a 9 to 5 job in the office. An officer at a very young age is given responsibilities that his peers ashore can only dream of and the remuneration is of course the best comparable to any of the top professions. So to know more about this career read on and learn about a career option that you didn't know existed.

What is Merchant Navy?

The primary function of the Merchant navy is to transport goods from one place to another. It is the most essential component of world economy. More than 90% of goods are transported all over the world using ships.

Imagine a world without ships, no oil would reach refineries and all petrol pumps would be forced to shut down also all other transportation would shut down because they would not get their fuel. Farmers all over the world would be destroyed because fertilizers would not be available to their farms or worse a crop harvested in a place would not be able to reach the required market. Steel manufacturers and cloth manufactures would close down their industries and the world would go back to the Stone Age and yes you wouldn't be reading this article because newsprint and the ink would not have made it to the printing press.

Now that you know and have an idea of what the Merchant Navy is and how it affects your life, read more to know how you can make a career out of it.

Career options in the Merchant Navy:

So what work do people do on board ships? Is life one big cruise for them? Let's explore the possibility of a career in the Merchant Navy.

Ships carry passengers and cargo from one place to another, so they require to be loaded properly. Ships are also navigated and that requires a lot of skill, and since ships are made of steel and ply in saltwater they also need to be maintained from time to time all these jobs are carried out on board by **Navigating officers or Deck officers.**

Ships are like a floating city, propelled by huge engines, generators which generate electricity and also a host of other machineries that are required for the day to day running of the ship, all these jobs are carried out by **Marine Engineers** on board.

Generally a Navigating officer or a Marine Engineer would spend 4 to 6 months on board a ship and once his tour of duty is over, he/she gets to enjoy half of time spent on board as leave, in this case 2 to 3 months of holiday.

The remuneration for a mariner is very lucrative and a 3rd officer or a 4th Engineer who is of 23 to 24 years is expected to earn Rs.1 lakh per month while on board, whereas a Chief Engineer or a Captain earns anything between Rs.3 to 4 lakh per month while on board.

How to join the Merchant Navy.

There are a certain requirements of joining the Merchant Navy and we shall dwell on them briefly,

Navigating Officer:

Academic and Health Requirements:

To work on board as a Navigating officer one needs to have the following qualification, either be a XIIth science student less than 22 years with PCM marks more than 60% marks or a BSc graduate with more than 60% in either Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry or Electronics but with Physics as a subject in any one year and age less than 25 years. In both cases a student must have more than 50% marks in English in the XIIth standard. Since this is a profession where a lot of time is spent in Navigation, a student who wishes to join the Navigating stream must have a 6x6 eyesight without glasses, no colour blindness and be of perfect health.

Candidates who fulfill such criteria can apply to shipping companies for the position of a deck cadet. Selections of deck cadets are generally conducted by companies during the month of May-June and November- December every year and if their selection criterion is met then a candidate can find employment as a deck cadet.

Pre Sea Training:

Before a deck cadet is sent on board a ship he/she has to undergo a 1 year pre-sea training in a Maritime training institute ashore. The tuition fee of such training has to be borne by the candidate, which is to a tune of Rs.2 to Rs.3 lakh. Bank loans are available for candidates who need to finance their studies without burdening their parents.

On board Training and Examination:

Once a cadet completes a year of pre-sea training, he is then placed on board ship, his training period on board the ship is of 18 months and this period may be dispersed over 2 or 3 different ships with a leave period in between. During this period of on-board training, the apprentice receives a stipend of approximately Rs 15000 per month. Remember the stipend is what one get during the training period and in many cases it is more that what a person can aspire to earn in a job when ashore. Once the on board training period is completed the cadet is eligible for appearing competency examinations as a navigating officer conducted by the Directorate General of Shipping, Govt. of India. A candidate who successfully passes these exams is then eligible to go on board a ship as a third officer.

Career Progression:

In the Merchant Navy if you want to progress to be a captain of the ship then you have to give a competency exam at each stage, the qualifying aspect of giving exams is sea time. Just like a pilot

requires flying time, mariners require sea time and once an officer completes a specific amount of sea time he can appear for an examination for the next rank. A third officer can go on to become a 2nd officer after gaining some experience but to be a chief officer one must appear for exams after completing 18 months of sea time and after completing those exams can appear for another examination after 18 months to qualify to become a Captain of a ship. Generally it takes about 11 years for a candidate to go from a cadet to qualify to be a captain of a ship.

Marine Engineer:

Academic and Health Requirements:

To work on board as a Marine Engineer one needs to be B.E. in Mechanical Engineering with 60% marks aggregate, age less than 28 years and must have more than 50% marks in English in the XIIth standard. The Marine Engineer must not have less than 6x12 on each eye (i.e. ± 2.5 in each eye) and no colour blindness and be of perfect health.

Candidates who fulfill such criteria can apply to shipping companies for the position of a Trainee Marine Engineer. Selections of Trainee Marine Engineer are generally conducted by companies during the month of May-June and November- December every year and if their selection criterion is met then a candidate can find employment as a Trainee Marine Engineer.

Pre Sea Training:

Before a Trainee Marine Engineer is sent on board a ship he/she has to undergo a 1 year pre-sea training in a Maritime training institute ashore. The tuition fee of such training has to be borne by the candidate, which is to a tune of Rs.2 to Rs.3 lakh. Bank loans are available for candidates who need to finance their studies without burdening their parents.

On board Training and Examination:

Once a cadet completes a year of pre-sea training, he is then placed on board ship, his training period on board the ship is of 6 months. During this period of apprenticeship on board Once the on board training period is completed the Trainee Marine Engineer is eligible for appearing competency examinations as a Marine Engineer conducted by the Directorate General of Shipping, Govt. of India, and once a candidate successfully passes these exams is eligible to go on board a ship as a fourth Engineer.

Career Progression:

Here again as in the Navigating officer, if a marine engineer wants to progress to be a chief engineer of the ship then he has to give a competency exam at each stage, the qualifying aspect of giving exams is again sea time, after a specific amount of sea time is completed he can appear examination for the next rank. Thus a Fourth Engineer can go on to become a Third engineer after gaining some experience but to be a second engineer he has to appear for exams after completing 18 months of sea time and after completing those exams can appear for another examination after 18 months to qualify to become a Chief Engineer of a ship. Generally it takes about 11 years for a candidate to go from a Trainee Marine Engineer to qualify to be a chief engineer of a ship.

Why to choose Merchant Navy as a Career?

Here are the reasons why you must opt for a Career in the Merchant Navy:

- An Exciting and Adventurous profession.
- Excellent salary structure
- Financial independence, you start earning as a deck cadet.
- Lots of responsibility at a very early age.
- Opportunities see the world and meet and interact with people from different countries.
- For a go-getter this career promises fast progress.
- You can choose your working period
- There is job security
- Long vacations, where you can give uninterrupted attention to your family members and indulge in various hobbies.
- Excellent accommodation and food on board ships.
- No expenses incurred for lodging or food while on board a ship.

Which company to choose?

Choose a company after careful scrutiny, a company having large diversified fleet of ships should be preferred since you can gain a lot of experience in different types of ships and progress to the next rank will be faster.

Ensure the background of the company, you can know more about a company by a little research on the web, ask people with a background in shipping about the company you are about to join, do not get fooled by the lure of money alone. Try to look for companies which provide you a long term career, safety and quality being prime movers and who have a variety of ships to provide you with a wide spectrum of experience.

Contact Us

This article is published in the interest of furthering the maritime profession by giving true and factual information to youngsters interested in a career in shipping. We are an Association comprising of 95% of the Maritime Employers and Shipping companies and hence represent the majority of all organizations associated with the merchant navy.

You can know more about this profession by visiting our website <http://www.careerinshipping.com> or sending in your queries at careeratsea@gmail.com. For more information you may call on our **Toll Free Number 1800 209 7447**.

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